

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 18878

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJ: PONOMAREV SPEECH AT BUDAPEST COMMUNIST MEETING

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

1. SUMMARY. PONOMAREV'S SPEECH TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES' PREPARATORY MEETING IN BUDAPEST IS, WE BELIEVE, THE STRONGEST DEFENSE OF DETENTE AND OF IMPROVING SOVIET RELATIONS WITH CAPITALIST WORLD THAT THIS LEADING SOVIET IDOLOGIST HAS EVER MADE IN A COMMUNIST SETTING. END SUMMARY.

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2. THE PONOMAREV SPEECH IS SUMMARIZED IN EXTENSO IN A TASS VERSION APPEARING IN IZVESTIYA DECEMBER 20 AND PRAVDA DECEMBER 21. PONOMAREV LEADS OFF BY ASSERTING THAT THE MAIN AGENDA ITEM AT THE BERLIN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE NEXT SPRING SHOULD BE A CONFIRMATION OF THE SOVIET POLICY OF DETENTE. AFTER NOTING THE DECEMBER 16 CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM'S ENDORSEMENT OF THE PEACE PROGRAM AND OF BREZHNEV'S SUMMITRY, PONOMAREV PLEDGES THE CPSU LEADERSHIP TO MAXIMUM EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF STRENGTHENING DETENTE AND PEACE. HE ASSERTS IN THIS REGARD THAT POLITICAL DETENTE IS EUROPE SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED AND BACKED UP BY MILITARY DETENTE.

3. FOLLOWING A DISCUSSION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CSCE AND MBFR, PONOMAREV TAKES HEAD-ON THE ARGUMENT OF THOSE (READ SOME WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS) WHO BELIEVE THAT MOSCOW'S DETENTE POLICY IS SACRIFICING THEIR INTERESTS. OCCASIONALLY, HE SAYS, YOU HEAR ASSERTIONS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL TIES BETWEEN SOCIALIST AND CAPITALIST STATES IN EFFECT STRENGTHENS THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM. PONOMAREV STRONGLY DISAGREES, AND SUMMONS FOUR ARGUMENTS IN DEFENSE OF DETENTE. FIRST, CAPITALISM UNDER CONDITIONS OF DETENTE IS CURRENTLY UNDERGOING AN ECONOMIC CRISIS FROM WHICH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN IMMUNE. SECOND, SOVIET ECONOMIC ORDERS PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT IN MANY INDUSTRIAL SECTORS IN WESTERN COUNTRIES, THUS HELPING THE WORKING CLASSES IN THE WEST. THIRD, WORLD SOCIALISM FACILITATES THE STRUGGLE OF THE POPULAR MASSES IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES FOR THEIR INTERESTS, NOT ONLY BY ITS EXAMPLE AND ITS IDEAS BUT ALSO BY ITS CONCRETE ECONOMIC ACTS (READ EAST-WEST ECONOMIC COOPERATION). AND FOURTH, THE BROADENING OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION IS A RELIABLE MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THE PEACEFUL CHARACTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND THUS A MORE-THAN-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE.

4. LATER IN HIS SPEECH PONOMAREV RETURNS TO HIS DEFENSE OF DETENTE. HE SAYS THE BERLIN CONFERENCE SHOULD SINGLE OUT THE FOES OF DETENTE, WHO ARE PROLONGING THE ARMS RACE AND SHARPENING THE CAPITALIST ECONOMIC CRISIS (THROUGH INFLATION, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND HIGH PRICES) TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE WORKING PEOPLE IN THE CAPITALIST WORLD. HE NOTES "WITH CONCERN" (AS HE DID IN WARSAW IN OCTOBER) THE GROWTH OF THE RIGHT-WING AND OF THE NEO-FASCIST

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DANGER IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES OF THE CONTINENT. COMMUNISTS, HE SAYS, MUST CALL FOR SOLIDARITY AGAINST THIS THREAT AND WITH THE FORCES OPPOSING IT. PONOMAREV THEN ASSERTS THAT THE BERLIN MEETING SHOULD DECLARE ITSELF AGAINST THE ARGUMENT THAT PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CLASS STRUGGLE. IT SHOULD SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE ATTEMPTS BY CAPITALISTS TO ESCAPE FROM THEIR CRISIS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE WORKERS AND BY MEANS OF A MOVE TO THE RIGHT. THIS COMMUNIST DUTY, HE SAYS, HAS MORE THAN

AN INTERNAL POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE; I.E., IT AFFECTS PEACE.

5. PONOMAREV SUMMONS ONE FINAL ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF DETENTE. THE PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT IT CREATES, HE SAYS, WILL HASTEN THE REALIZATION OF THE LONG-TERM SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PLANS OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, THUS AIDING THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM AND THE MOVEMENT TOWARD COMMUNISM.

6. PONOMAREV, OR COURSE, DOES NOT DEPART FROM THE STANDARD SOVIET LINE THAT A SHARP IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE CONTINUES IN CONDITIONS OF DETENTE. AND, WITH A NOD TO CSCE BASKET THREE, HE IDENTIFIES SUCH AREAS AS CULTURAL VALUE, AND INFORMATION AS SPECIFIC BATTLE-GROUNDS FOR THE CLASS STRUGGLE. HE ALSO IS CRITICAL, PARTICULARLY IN DISCUSSING THE THIRD WORLD, OF CAPITALIST "MONOPOLIES", BUT HIS PRESCRIPTION FOR DEALING WITH THEM IS VAGUE (PROBABLY A REFLECTION OF HIS SENSITIVITY TO THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET REGIME IS SEEKING DEALS WITH THE VERY INDUSTRIES CRITICIZED); HE SAYS ONLY THAT, IN CONDITIONS OF A NEW CORRELATION OF FORCES, THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT CAN DO MUCH AGAINST NEOCOLONIALISM BY TAKING ANTI-MONOPOLIST AND ANTI-IMPERIALIST POSITIONS. PONOMAREV'S TREATMENT OF THE ENERGY QUESTION IS SIMILARY SOFT; HE SIMPLY TROTS OUT THE OLD ADAGE THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE A SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO DISPOSE OF THEIR OWN NATURAL RICHES.

7. ON QUESTIONS RELATING SPECIFICALLY TO THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT, PONOMAREV DOES NOT HAVE TOO MUCH TO SAY (POSSIBLY TASS EXCISED PARTS OF HIS SPEECH HERE). HE CALLS IN STANDARD TERMS FOR A STRENGTHENING OF COMMUNIST UNITY AND SOLIDARITY. HE SAYS LITTLE ABOUT THE THORNY ISSUE OF WHETHER COMMUNISTS SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN POPULAR FRONTS, NOTING ONLY THAT THERE IS A NEED TO FORM AN ALL-EUROPEAN ANTI-WAR COALITION OF DIFFERENT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FORCES. HIS VIRTUAL SILENCE ON THIS ISSUE STRENGTHENS CONFIDENTIAL

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OUR SUPPOSITION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE GROWING WARIER OF THE POPULAR FRONT CONCEPT.

8. PONOMAREV DOES NOT ONCE MENTION THE CHINESE; NEVERTHELESS, THEY ARE GHOSTS AT HIS BANQUET. HE SEEMS INTENT ON BUILDING A FRAMEWORK INTO WHICH THE CHINESE ELEMENT CAN BE INTRODUCED LATER ON, IF CONSIDERED ADVISABLE. THUS, HE CRITICIZES "EURO-CENTRISM" AND EMPHASIZES THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST CONFERENCE MUST ALSO DEAL WITH FACTORS OUTSIDE EUROPE. HE SAYS THAT A CONSISTENT AND PRINCIPLED STRUGGLE MUST BE WAGED AGAINST ALL "IN EUROPE AND BEYOND" WHO WAVE THE FLAG OF ANTI-COMMUNISM AND ANTI-SOVIETISM AND WHO SEEK TO WEAKEN THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION OF SOCIALISM. HE ALSO SAYS THAT IT IS THE INTERNATIONAL TASK OF COMMUNISTS IN ALL COUNTRIES TO COMBAT EFFORTS TO UNDERMINE THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT THROUGH NATIONALISM. IN EFFECT, BY

PAINTING A CANVAS LARGER THAN EUROPE ITSELF, PONOMAREV RESERVES THE OPTION OF PUTTING THE PRC FACTOR INTO IT.

9. PONOMAREV'S DEFENSE OF DETENTE IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS EARLIER STATEMENTS AND MOST RECENTLY WITH HIS SPEECH AT THE WARSAW PREPARATORY MEETING IN OCTOBER. BUT IN BUDAPEST HE GOES FARTHER THAN HE HAS BEFORE. HIS OVERALL MESSAGE IS CLEARLY THAT THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM IS HARMFUL TO THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT FOR BOTH ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REASONS. NOT ONLY DOES IT WORSEN THE ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE WEST; IT ALSO BRINGS THE THREAT OF A RIGHTWING REACTION. IN FACT, THE LOGIC OF PONOMAREV'S ARGUMENT ALMOST IMPLIES THAT THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT SHOULD DO WHAT IT CAN TO HELP THE CAPITALIST COUNTRIES OUT OF THEIR CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES -- A STRANGE MESSAGE INDEED FOR A SOVIET IDEALOGUE TO BRING TO A COMMUNIST PARTY MEETING.

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